

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 20574

E.O. LL652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, FR, PINT

SUBJECT: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- JULY, 1975

SUMMARY: THERE ARE GATHERING SIGRS THAT EVERYONE CONFIDENTIAL

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CERNED -- THE GOF, OPPOSITION PARTIES, THE LABOR

UNIONS, THE PRESS -- IS WORRIED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF A DIFFICULT FALL RENTREE. PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC MET WITH BUSINESS AND LABOR LEADERS; THE RESULTS SUGGEST THAT QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED ALL OVER FRANCE WHICH GISCARD'S RELATIVELY POLLYANNAISH SPEECHES CAN NO LONGER COVER OVER. JOURNALISTS, DEPUTIES (SOME FROM THE MAJORITY) AND EXER- IENCED POLITICAL OBSERVERS HAVE BEGUN SUGGESTING THAT GISCARD MAY BE REACTING TOO SLOWLY TO THE SLUGGISHNESS WITH WHICH THE ECONOMY HAS REACTED TO THE GOF PROGRAM. SOME FACTORIES CONTINUE TO BE OCCUPIED BY STRIKING WORKERS BUT THE GOF HAS NOT GOTTEN INVOLVED AND STATES THAT IT IS ALLOWING THE BARGAINING PROCESS TO FOLLOW ITS COURSE. WHILE NO ONE SEEMS TO EXPECT GOVERNMENT-TOPPLING CATASTROPHES TO OCCUR IN THE FALL' THE GENERAL FRENCH MOOD IS OF UNEASINESS AND APPREHENSION. EVEN A FRENCH VICTORY IN THE TOUR DE FRANCE, THE FIRST IN 8 YEARS, DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE NOTABLY BRIGHTENED FRENCH SPIRITS. END SUMMARY

L. THE ECONOMIC SCENE -- A SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS: IF JUNE ENDED WITH REASSURING PRESIDENTIAL WORDS THAT "ALL WILL BE WELL" (PARIS 17104) JULY WITNESSED AN IMPLICIT OFFICIAL ADMISSION YET THAT IT WASNT. THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, ALL STANDARD ECONOMIC INDICATORS AND SURVEYS SHOWED CONTINUED DECLINE IN PRODUCTION AND DEEPENED PESSIMISM ON PROSPECTS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR, WHILE UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUED TO RISE AND COMPANIES PROMISED MORE LAYOFFS IN THE FALL. DURING JULY, PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC UNDERTOOK CONSULTATIONS ON THE ECONOMY WITH BUSINESS AND LABOR LEADERS (SEE SEPTEL); INTERMINISTERIAL MEETINGS ON THE ECONOMY WERE HELD JULY 23RD AND 25TH. POLICY SHIFT FIRST CAME IN THE WAKE OF THE JULY 25-26 GISCARD/SCHMIDT SUMMIT AS THE GOF ANNOUNCED IT WOULD INTRODUCE NEW STIMULATIVE MEASURES IN THE FALL WHICH WOULD CREATE A DEFICIT OF SOME L5 TO 20 BILLION FRANCS IN THE L976 BUDGET -- A RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT COMPARED WITH DEFICITS IN OTHER MAJOR COUNTRIES. NO DETAILS WERE GIVEN, EXCEPT THAT SOME LOOSENING OF CONSUMER CREDIT WOULD BE MADE.

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2. GISCARD PRESENTS HIS TIMETABLE: A FULL COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING JULY 29 WAS FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER GISCARD TV APPEARANCE IN WHICH HE ADMITTED THAT FIRST HALF ECONOMIC RESULTS WERE FAR WORSE THAN EXPECTED AND CON- CEDED IMPLICITLY THAT UNEMPLOYMENT WOULD REACH THE ONE MILLION MARK. ALTHOUGH A TIMETABLE FOR FIXING NEW MEASURES WAS ESTABLISHED -- MINISTERIAL MEETINGS IN

AUGUST, EXECUTIVE BRANCH DECISIONS TO BE ANNOUNCED
SEPTEMBER 4 AND THE PARLIAMENT TO VOTE DURING A SPECIAL
SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE ANNOUNCED FOR SEPTEMBER 8-1
NO FURTHER DETAILS WERE GIVEN. GISCARD INSISTED, HOWEVER
THAT A NEW KIND OF "QUALITY" GROWTH WAS IN STORE. OPPOSI-
TION LEADERS AND EVEN SOME MODERATE JOURNALISTS ACCUSED
GISCARD OF NAIVETE IN TAKING SO LONG TO ADMIT FRANCE'S
ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND ROTED THAT THE SCHEDULE MEANT SIX
MORE WEEKS OF DELAY IN THE FACE OF AN URGENT NEED FOR
ACTION. IN DEFENSE OF THE GOF PROGRAM, FINANCE
MINISTER FOURCADE OFFERED ASSURANCES OF BEGINNINGS OF
WORLD ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN THE FALL, CLAIMED THE NEED
FOR ADDITIONAL REFLECTION AND "REFINEMENT" AND SUGGESTED
THAT COORDINATION WITH FRANCE'S EC PARTNERS WAS THE
PRINCIPLE REASON FOR DELAY. FOURCADE'S STATEMENT, WITH

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ITS IMPLICATION THAT NO THINKING AND LITTLE CONSULTATION
HAD BEEN DONE UNTIL NOW, HAD A HOLLOW RING AND THE
OPPOSITION, WHICH CLAIMED THAT THE GOF HAD FINALLY COME
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TO THE SAME ANALYSIS OFFERED BY THE LEFT SINCE 1973,
SEEMED TO HAVE SCORED POINTS.

3. THE UDR AND THE IR: "THE UDR IS NOT ON VACATION,"
ANDRE BORD, ITS NEW SECRETARY GENERAL, PROCLAIMED AT THE
END OF JULY. TO PROVE IT, HE NAMED HIS NEW BOARD OF
DIRECTORS, WHICH INCLUDES MOST NOTICEABLY THE MOVING UP
OF ROBERT GROSSMAN, FORMER NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR YOUTH
AFFAIRS, TO THE POST OF DEPUTY SECRETARY. BCRD'S
DECLARED AIMS IN REASSIGNING KEY POSITIONS ARE TO
MODERNIZE THE MOVEMENT, PREPARE FOR FUTURE ELECTIONS AND
DEVELOP THE IMPLANTATION OF THE GAULLIST MOVEMENT IN
FACTORIES AND THE PROFESSIONS. A SLIGHT RIFT SURFACED
DURING JULY CONCERNING THE UDR'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS
NATIONAL DEFENSE, WITH FORMER PM MICHEL DEBRE IMPLYING
IN A NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR INTERVIEW THAT WHILE HE AND MOST
UDR "MILITANTS" FAVORED DEPLOYMENT EXCLUSIVELY IN FRANCE
OF THE CONTROVERSIAL "PLUTON" MISSILE (PARIS 19142),
CHIRAC AND SOME OTHERS FELT THAT PLUTON SHOULD BE A
"CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEFENSE OF EUROPE." THE IR, NOT
TO BE OUTDONE BY ITS MAJORITY PARTNER, ALSO REINFORCED
ITS HEADQUARTERS. PHILIPPE AUGIER, FORMER PRESIDENT OF
THE YOUNG IR HAS BEEN PLACED IN CHARGE OF COORDINATION,
AND JACQUES BLANC, DEPUTY FROM THE LOZERE HAS BEEN
PLACED IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY,
HUBERT BASSOT HAS LOST HIS PRIVILEGED PLACE AS NUMBER
TWO JUST UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL DOMINATI AND BEEN
NAMED HEAD OF PARTY "ANIMATION" (READ PROPAGANDA). THE
BIG NEWS OF COURSE IS THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE IR
PRESIDENCY (HELD BY MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR PONIATOWSKI)
AND THE MERGENCE OF SECRETARY GENERAL DOMINATTI AS TOP

MAN IN THE FORMAL PARTY HIERARCHY. UNLIKE THE CHIRAC/BORD RELATIONSHIP IN WHICH THE LATTER IS LITTLE MORE THAN A FIGUREHEAD, DOMINATI PROMISES TO BE FAR MORE HIS OWN MAN. WHATEVER BORD MIGHT SAY, MAJOR POLICY DECISION AND UNDERTAKINGS IN BOTH PARTIES HAVE BEEN PUT OFF UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER AND THE RIPPLES OF A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHIRAC AND PONIATOWSKI REMAIN JUST THAT.

4. THE CENTER: CONTRARY TO EXPECTATIONS, THE FEDERATION
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DES REFORMATEUSO HAS ELECTED GABRIEL PERONNET TO ITS PRESIDENCY. JULY IS THUS A MONTH OF DOUBLE VICTORY FOR PERONNET, STATE SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE WHO WAS ALSO ELECTED TO THE PRESIDENCY CF THE RADICAL SOCIALIST PARTY' REPLACING JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER (PARIS 17699). GISCARD D'ESTAING HAS PUBLICAY "CONDONED" PERONNET'S ADVANCES' FROM WHICH ONE CAN CONCLUDE THAT HE HOPES PERONNET WILL RETAIN HIS POSITION (AS PERONNET IS IN THE MAJCRITY SIDE CF THE CENTRISTS, VGE NO DOUBT FEELS HE WILL PULL IN SUPPORT FROM THE LEFT).

5. PORTUGAL: ALMOST ALL OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL FORMATIONS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN CLOSER CONTACTS WITH PORTUGUESE COUNTERPARTS. REFORMISTS ANDRE DILIGENT (FIRST SECRETARY OF THE REFORMIST FEDERATION), JEAN-MARIE DAILLET (VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE CENTER DEMOCRATS) AND BERNARD STASI (MEMBER OF THE REFORMIST SECRETARIAT) MADE A FACT-FINDING TRIP TO PORTUGAL AND RETURNED FULL OF DISILLUSIONMENT AND PESSIMISM. SOCIALIST MICHEL ROCARD AND JACQUES ATTALI WENT TO PORTUGAL TO REPRESENT THE PS AT LISBON RALLIES, BOTH RETURNED PROFESSING SUPPORT FOR SOARES AND THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. BUT ROCARD HAS SAVAGELY CRITICIZED SOARES IN PRIVATE FOR "POLITICAL AMATEURISM" AND ATTALI HAS TOLD FRANCOIS MITTERRAND THAT A PORTUGUESE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF "CATASTROPHIC" PROPORTION IS NOT FAR AWAY. PORTUGUESE PPD LEADR EMILIO GUERREIRO VISITED THE UDR IN FRANCE AND NOTED THE DEATH OF POPULAR POLITICAL LIBERTY IN PORTUGAL. THE UPSHOT OF ALL OF THE INTEREST APPEARS TO BE A SLIGHT SHIFT ON THE PART OF THE EVER-MOBILEFRENCH CENTER TOWARDS THE RIGHT' LARGELY OUT OF DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE COURSE OF LEFT POLITICS IN PORTUGAL. BOTH PCF AND PS HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THEIR COUNTERPARTS, BUT RUMORS LEAKING OUT OF THE LIAISON COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED LEFT SUGGEST THAT BOTH ARE WORRIED THAT A CONTINUED IMPASSE BETWEEN POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE ARMY IN PORTUGAL COULD RESULT IN A RESTORATION OF A RIGHT-WING GOVERNMENT.

6. THE LEFT -- A TIME FOR PREPARATION: BOTH PS AND
PCF ARE GATHERING MATERIAL FOR WHAT THEY ASSUME WILL BE
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A DIFFICULT FALL. THE PS HAS RECENTLY CHARGED ITS TOP SPECIALIST ON PS/PCF RELATIONS, NATIONAL SECRETARY LIONEL JOSPIN, WITH THE PREPARATION OF STILL ANOTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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ANALYSIS OF PCF CONDUCT. THIS MOST RECENT BURST OF INTEREST SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN SPARKED BY THE PCF'S RELEASE ON JULY 8, JUST AS MITTERRAND WAS HOLDING A MAJOR PRESS CONFERENCE TO ATTACK GISCARD'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM, OF A 1972 STATEMENT BY PCF SECRETARY GENERAL GEORGES MARCHAIS QUESTIONING THE SINCERITY OF THE PS' DEVOTION TO THE NEWLY-SIGNED COMMON PROGRAM. MITTERRAND IS SAID TO HAVE EXPLODED AT THE NEWS OF THE PCF RELEASE OF THIS HITHERTO SECRET DOCUMENT IN WHICH MARCHAIS WARNED THE PCF CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF HIS DOUBTS ABOUT PS WILLINGNESS TO REFUSE THE TEMPTATIONS OF ALLIANCES WITH NON-MARXIST PARTIES, AND IN WHICH MARCHAIS WONDERED ABOUT PS DESIRES TO SUPPORT "MEANINGFUL" NATIONALIZATION. MITTERRAND AND HIS CLOSEST LIEUTENANTS ARE TELLING PRESS PEOPLE (OFF THE RECORD), DIPLOMATS AND TRUSTED CONFIDANTS THAT THE JULY 8 INCIDENT PROVES "OBJECTIVE COLLUSION" BETWEEN THE PCF AND THE GOF; PUBLICLY THE PS IS GRITTING ITS TEETH AND CONTINUING ITS ATTACKS ON THE MAJORITY.

7. SPECULATION ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED LEFT: PS TEMPERS, UNDOUBTEDLY MADE NO SWEETER BY ONE OF FRANCE'S RECORD HEAT WAVES, ARE RUNNING SHORT WITH THE PCF. WHILE NO ONE IS TALKING ABOUT A BREAK IN THE UNION OF THE LEFT, THE PS IS PLAINLY SAYING THAT IT BELIEVES THE PCF HAS OVERSTEPPED WHATEVER INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES OF GOOD CONDUCT REMAINED AFTER THE LONG QUARREL WHICH BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER, 1974. PCF DEPUTIES HAVE RECENTLY BEEN CALLING FOR A LITTLE MORE RESTRAINT AND GOOD WILL TOWARDS THE PS ON THE PART OF THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND THIS TREND IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE. ONE THEORY, WHICH HAS ATTRACTED ADMIRATION IN PARIS OVER THE PAST MONTH, IS THAT CURRENT PCF TACTICS REFLECT A POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN MARCHAIS, TRADITIONALLY ALLIED WITH THE FORCES FAVORABLE TO THE ALLIANCE WITH THE PS, AND THE LEROY/KANAPA FACTION, WHICH WANTS A HARD LINE. BY ALLOWING RELEASE OF THE REPORT ON THE ONE DAY WHEN IT WAS MOST SURE TO HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE PS, MARCHAIS MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO PROVE THAT HE CAN

AND WILL PLAY AS ROUGH AS HIS MORE ORTHODOX PARTY
COLLEAGUES.

8. JULY - A KIND OF MOODY ANTICIPATION: PREOCCUPIED
BY AN EARLY AND UNUSUALLY HOT SUMMER, AN EXCITING TOUR
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DE FRANCE WHICH SAW GISCARD WELCOME THE WINNERS TO A LAST LAP ON THE CHAMPS-ELYSEES IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF NEAR HYSTERIA, GRIPPING CAUTIOUSLY ABOUT THE CSCE SUMMIT OUT OF FEAR THAT THE WEST HASGIVEN AWAY TOO MUCH FOR TOO LITTLE, THE FRENCH HAVE STAGGERED INTO THE USUAL AUGUST DISPERSAL. WHILE IT HAS AGAIN BECOME POSSIBLE TO PARK A CAR IN PARIS, BEACHES AND MOUNTAIN RESORTS ARE REPORTING RECORD DENSITIES AND -- NO DOUBT A SIGN OF THE TIMES -- LOWER PER CAPITA SPENDING. NEWSPAPERS ARE AT THEIR SKIMPIEST POLITICAL LEADERS ARE OUT OF TOWN AND THE PRESS IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE TOPLESS TREND ON THE RIVERIA'S BEACHES THAN IN ANY NUMBER OF PROPOSALS FOR SOLVING THE CURRENT FRENCH CRISIS. BUT THERE IS AN AIR OF WAITING IN FRANCE NOW' PERHAPS BEST DESCRIBED BY A POPULAR RADIO STAR WHO ANNOUNCED THAT HE WAS SPENDING HIS AUGUST IN THE SUN' BASTING HIMSELF AT HIS OWN EXPENSE WHILE WAITING TO SEE JUST HOW AND BY WHOM HE WOULD BE EATEN. HIS AUDIENCE DID NOT LAUGH.

9. THERE WILL BE NO MONTHLY REPORT FOR AUGUST OUR NEXT REPORT WILL BE TRANSMITTED IN THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER.

GAMMON

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